

The General Virtues of the Qur'ān and encouragement to study it. The excellence of the one who seeks it, recites it, listens to it and acts by it.

This topic is vast and scholars have written many books on it. We will mention some points which point out the excellence of the Qur'ān and what Allah has prepared for its people when they are sincere for His sake and act by it. The first aspect of the excellence of the Qur'ān that the believer should be aware of is that it is from the Lord of the worlds and is uncreated. It consists of unparalleled words and has a quality which has no equivalent or like. It comes from the light of Allah's Essence. Recitation is the voices of the reciters and their tunes. It is their acquisition, and they are commanded to do it as an obligation in certain acts of worship and it is recommended at many times. They are forbidden to recite it when they are in a state of major impurity, and are rewarded for doing it and punished for abandoning it. This is part of what the Muslims,

the people of the Truth, agree on. Traditions state that and well-known reports prove it.

Reward and punishment are only connected to what is part of what people earn, as will be explained. Were it not that Allah had placed in the hearts of His slaves the strength to bear it so that they can reflect on it, study it and remember what it contains of His obedience, worship and performing His duties and obligations, they would be too weak and would collapse under its weight or perish. How could they bear it when Allah says, “*Had We sent down this Qur’ān onto a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, crushed to pieces out of fear of Allah*” (59:21)? What is the strength of hearts compared to that of the mountains? But Allah provided His slaves with the strength to bear what He wishes as a favour and mercy from Him.

As for traditions about this topic, the first is what at-Tirmidhī transmitted from Abū Sa‘īd that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “The blessed and exalted Lord said, ‘If anyone is distracted from asking Me by the Qur’ān and remembering Me, I will give him better than what I give the askers.’” He also said, “The excellence of the words of Allah over all other words is like the excellence of Allah over His creation.” (*ḥasan gharīb ḥadīth*) As-Samarqandī reported in his *Musnad* that ‘Abdullāh said, “The seven long *sūras* are like the Torah. The [*sūras* with] a hundred *āyats* are like the Gospel. and the *Mathānī* is like the *Zabūr*. The rest of the Qur’ān is excellent.”

In at-Tirmidhī, ‘Alī reported, “I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, ‘There will be trials like patches of dark night.’ I asked, ‘Messenger of Allah, how can one escape them?’ He replied, ‘The Book of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, contains your history, information about what came before you, news about what will come after you and correct judgement between you. It is decisive, not a jest. Allah will crush any tyrant who abandons it and Allah will misguide whoever seeks guidance from other than it. It is the Firm Rope of Allah, His Clear Light and the Wise Reminder. It is the Straight Path. Passions are not misguided by it, the tongues do not become sated with it, and

the godfearing do not become bored by it. It does not wear out when it is recited a lot and its wonders do not cease. It is that which the *jinn* did not leave once they had heard it. They said, “We heard a wonderful *Qur’ān* which guides to right guidance.” (72:1-2) Whoever knows it has knowledge which takes precedence. Whoever utters it speaks the truth. Whoever judges by it is just. Whoever acts by it is rewarded. Whoever calls to it is guided to a straight path. Take it, one-eyed.”¹

Al-Anbārī says in his book, *The Refutation of the One who Opposes the Recension of ‘Uthmān*, transmitting from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “This *Qur’ān* is the Banquet of Allah. Learn as much as you can from His banquet. This *Qur’ān* is the Rope of Allah, and it is the Clear Light and Useful Healing. It is a protection for the one who clings to it and a rescue for the one who follows it. It is not crooked and so puts things straight. It does not deviate so as to be blamed. Its wonders do not cease. It does not wear out with much repetition. So recite it. Allah will reward you with ten good deeds for every letter of its recitation. I do not say that *Alif-Lām-Mīm* is a letter nor two *alifs*, one placing its foot on the other. You should not stop reciting *Sūrat al-Baqara*. Shayṭān flees from a house in which *Sūrat al-Baqara* is recited. The house most devoid of good is a house empty of the Book of Allah.” In *Gharīb* Abū ‘Ubayd quotes ‘Abdullāh (ibn Mas‘ūd): “This *Qur’ān* is the Banquet of Allah. Whoever enters it is safe.” He said, “The interpretation of the *ḥadīth* is that it is a metaphor. The *Qur’ān* is likened to something Allah has prepared for people. They have good and benefits in it. Then He invited them to it.”

Al-Bukhārī transmits from ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “The best of you is the one who learns the *Qur’ān* and teaches it.” Muslim transmitted from Abū Mūsā that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “The metaphor of a believer who recites the *Qur’ān* is that of a citron – its scent is fragrant and its taste is good. The metaphor of a believer who does

1. This is Ibrāhīm an-Nakhā‘ī, who had one eye (*a‘war*).

not recite the Qur'ān is that of a date – it has no scent but its taste is sweet. The metaphor of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'ān is that of basil – its scent is fragrant but its taste is bitter. The metaphor of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'ān is that of colocynth – it has no scent and its taste is bitter.”

Abū Bakr al-Anbārī mentioned that when someone finished the Qur'ān, Abū 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān as-Sulamī would sit him before him and put his hand on his head and say to him, “You! Fear Allah! I do not know of anyone better than you if you act by what you know.” Ad-Dārimī reported that Wahb ad-Dhimārī said, “If Allah gives someone the Qur'ān and he stands reciting it at the ends of the night and the ends of the day and acts by what is in it and dies in obedience, on the Day of Rising Allah will raise him up with the angels and Prophets.”

Muslim related that 'Ā'isha reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Someone who recites the Qur'ān and is fluent in it is with the noble pious angels. Someone who recites the Qur'ān and stammers in it has two rewards as it is difficult for him.” He will have one reward for the recitation and one reward for the difficulty. The levels of the fluent reciter are all above that because the Qur'ān was difficult for him and then he rose beyond that to be like the angels. Allah knows best.

At-Tirmidhī reports from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Whoever recites a letter of the Book of Allah earns a good deed, and each good deed is worth ten like it. I do not say that '*Alif-lām-mīm*' is one letter, but that *alif* is a letter, *lām* is a letter, and *mīm* is a letter.” (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ gharīb*)

Muslim reported that 'Uqba ibn 'Āmir said, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came out to us while we were in the *Ṣuffa* and asked, ‘Which of you would like to go every day to Buṭhān or to al-'Aqīq and bring two large-humped she-camels from it without wrongdoing?’ We said, ‘Messenger of Allah, all of us would like that!’ He said, ‘Does not one of you go to the mosque and teach or recite two *āyats* from the Book of

Allah? That is better for him than two camels, and three verses are better for him than three camels, four verses are better than four camels, and so on regarding the number of camels.’”

Abū Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Allah will relieve anyone who relieves a believer of one of the afflictions of this world or one of the afflictions of the Day of Rising. Allah will give ease in this world and the Next to anyone who eases the hardship of another. Allah will veil anyone who veils another Muslim in this world and the Next. Allah will help His slave as long as His slave is helping his brother. Whoever travels a path on which he seeks knowledge, Allah will make the path to the Garden easy for him. People do not meet in one of the houses of Allah to recite the Book of Allah and study it together without tranquillity descending on them, mercy covering them, angels encircling them and Allah mentioning them to those who are with Him.”

Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, ad-Dārimī, and at-Tirmidhī reported that ‘Uqba ibn ‘Āmir heard the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, “The one who recites the Qur’ān publicly is like the person who gives his *ṣadaqa* publicly. The one who recites the Qur’ān secretly is like the person who conceals his *ṣadaqa*.” (*ḥasan gharīb*) At-Tirmidhī reported from Abū Hurayra that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “The Qur’ān will come on the Day of Rising and say, ‘O Lord, robe him!’ and He will put on him the crown of nobility.’ It will say, ‘O Lord, more!’ and He will put on him the robe of honour. Then it will say, ‘O Lord, be pleased with him!’ and He will be pleased with him. It will be said, ‘Recite and ascend,’ and he will be increased with a good deed for every *āyat*.” (*ṣaḥīḥ*)

Abū Dāwūd reported from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Those who know the Qur’ān will be told, ‘Recite and ascend. Recite slowly as you did in the world below. Your station will be at the last verse you recite.’” Ibn Mājah transmitted that Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “The one who knows

the Qur'ān will be told, 'Recite and ascend.' He will recite and rise a degree by every *āyat* until he reaches the last thing he has."

Al-Anbārī transmitted from Umm Umāma al-Ḥimṣī that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whoever is given a third of the Qur'ān has been given a third of Prophethood. Whoever is given two-thirds of the Qur'ān has been given two-thirds of Prophethood. Whoever recites all of the Qur'ān has been given all of Prophethood although he has not received any revelation. On the Day of Rising he will be told, 'Recite and ascend.' He will recite an *āyat* and rise a degree until he finishes what he knows of the Qur'ān. Then he will be told, 'Take,' and he will take. Then he will be asked, 'Do you know what is in your hands? Eternity is in your right hand and bliss in your left.'"

Al-Marwazī reported from 'Alī that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone reads the Qur'ān, recites it and memorises it, Allah will admit him to the Garden and let him intercede for all the people of his family for whom the Fire is mandatory." Umm ad-Dardā' said, "I visited 'Ā'isha and asked her, 'What is the excellence of the one who recites the Qur'ān over the one who does not recite it among those who enter the Garden?' 'Ā'isha replied, 'The number of the *āyats* of the Qur'ān is according to the number of degrees of the Garden. No one will enter the Garden better than the one who recites the Qur'ān.'" Abū Muḥammad Makkī mentioned it. Ibn 'Abbās said, "If anyone recites the Qur'ān and follows what is in it, Allah has guided him from misguidance and will protect him on the Day of Rising from an evil reckoning. That is because Allah says, '*All those who follow My guidance will not go astray and will not be miserable.*' (20:123)" Ibn 'Abbās said, "Allah has guaranteed that the one who follows the Qur'ān will not go astray in this world nor be wretched in the Next." Makkī also mentioned that. Al-Layth said, "It was said that mercy does not come quicker to anyone than to the one who listens to the Qur'ān according to the words of the Almighty, '*When the Qur'ān is recited, listen to it and be silent so*

that hopefully you will gain mercy.' (7:204)" The word "hopefully" makes it mandatory for Allah.

In the *Musnad* of Abū Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭayālīsī, it is reported from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Anyone who stands [in prayer] for ten *āyats* will not be written among the heedless. Anyone who stands for a hundred *āyats* will be written among the obedient. Anyone who stands for a thousand *āyats* will be written among those with heaps [*qinṭars*] of reward." There are many traditions about this, and what we have mentioned is adequate. Allah is the One who grants success.